

### Looking Ahead to Next Year and End of Year Review

SCAG was active in August in several significant areas, including engaging its potential new responsibilities under Assembly Bill 32 and Senate Bill 375, and moving into the next phase of the internal Strategic Planning process.

Staff and I attended a meeting of MPOs, hosted by the State Air Resources Board in Sacramento. The discussion focused on the regional/local government Greenhouse Gas target of the AB32 Scoping Plan. Discussions and consensus for revising the Draft Scoping Plan included incentive-based land use and smart growth strategies, a consistent statewide method and tool for measuring the target and monitoring progress, the merit of developing a targeted range in lieu of a targeted number for CO2 reduction, and the need to obtain state funding for implementing the land use strategies. The group also reached consensus to meet regularly, and for SCAG to take the lead to coordinate the technical tool development efforts among MPOs.

The strategic planning process continues to move forward. As mentioned in previous updates, 20 SCAG staff and three Regional Council members (making up the Strategic Advance Team) are engaged in an agency-wide strategic planning effort that will yield an operations plan to guide the agency for the next three to five years. It will also identify strategic internal goals and process improvements to effect positive change within the organization. The team has been meeting offsite for several mini-retreats during August and September, and has been providing informational forums at SCAG. These forums provide an opportunity for all staff to discuss the process and provide input in the development of draft Mission, Vision and Values statements for our internal operations. The Strategic Advance Team has identified 22 issue areas that fall into the broad categories of people, operations, customers, and finance. Consultants and staff will review these issues to ensure that significant concerns mentioned in the Organizational Survey Report are included, and will consolidate all issues into 16 main categories. At the next Strategic Advance Team meeting in September, members will determine the priorities of the 16 major issue areas and those to be addressed in the next fiscal year. We anticipate 2 to 5 issues will be the focus for the upcoming year. From the beginning of this effort, I have stressed with the staff the need for transparency, inclusiveness, and staff participation. We are achieving those goals.

The next phase in the process includes the September 23rd annual All Staff retreat where the staff and interested Regional Council members can participate in team building and refining/finalizing what has been developed to date. The final Mission, Vision, and Value statements will be presented, as well as the 16 topic areas for the operations plan. Staff will be asked to volunteer for focus groups on the issues. Next steps in the operations plan will be discussed. Please let me know if you are interested in participating.

This year has been both very rewarding and very challenging for me as your Executive Director. I would like to use this month's report to take stock of what we have been able to accomplish together since January of this year. With the leadership of the Regional Council, and with your support and hard work, we have succeeded in overcoming significant challenges to complete our responsibilities. Together we:

- Promptly identified significant budget problems, and took immediate action to address the shortfall by implementing a reduced staffing plan.
- Successfully resolved the two outstanding subregional audits (SGVCOG & OCCOG).
- Adopted the 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) with a program of \$569 billion in transportation and air

quality mitigation improvements, a positive conformity determination by the Federal agencies, and an unchallenged certification of the Program Environmental Impact Report. Ms. Sue Kaiser of FHWA, described the 2008 RTP as one of the better documents she has seen.

- Adopted the 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), with a positive conformity finding. The 2008 RTIP is currently awaiting State concurrence and Federal conformity determination.
- Adopted 2006 RTIP Amendment
- Completed the Draft 2008 Regional Comprehensive Plan with input from the Energy and Environment Policy Committee, Community, Economic and Human Development Committee, the RCP Task Force, the Solid Waste Task Force, the Water Policy Task Force, Energy Working Group and Open Space Working Group.
- Completed Regional Transportation Control Measures consistent with AQMP targets.
- Began the process of developing the Business Plan, including recruitment of consultants and conducting extensive surveys with SCAG staff and RC members, to produce a four-year framework and strategies to enhance the business operations of the agency.
- Development and finalization of a new organizational structure that is consistent with the mission and priorities defined by the Regional Council, and development of a core management team that is highly committed to implementing the mission of the Regional Council.
- Led the development of a blueprint for investigating RHNA reform as part of the priorities of the Regional Council.
- Led the staff's efforts in expanding our technical tool/modeling capacity in response to the needs of addressing Climate Change activities.
- Initiated the effort to prepare a City Profile Report for each of the member cities in the region scheduled for completion in fall 2008.
- Served as the regional planning data/GIS center by responding to hundreds of data requests from subregions, cities, and consultants.
- Staff presentation of research papers--over 11 at various professional conferences across the nation.
- Participated in the USGS inter-disciplinary study of likely impacts from a major earthquake in Southern California.
- Successfully fulfilled several IT Strategic Plan goals.
- Provided ideas and assistance for renegotiating building lease - including requesting and obtaining tenant improvement \$ for non-permanent improvements
- Played an important role in ensuring SCAG region's fair share funding through both the Corridor Mobility Improvement Account (CMIA) and Trade Corridor Improvement Funding (TCIF) programs by performing and coordinating the benefits of emission reductions attributable to the proposed projects.
- Continue to be an active participant in the Southern California Consensus Group effort to facilitate the TCIF funding allocation process. In addition to supporting the project sponsors' analytical work with performance/emissions assessments, SCAG has been providing administrative support to the region's project sponsors to ensure a smooth and timely funding allocation process.

- Continue to play a vital role in identifying and narrowing corridor improvement options on I-710 from the Ports to Downtown and conduct the Environmental Impact Report associated with the Corridor Improvement Strategies. SCAG has been a funding partner in this effort.
- Finalized our role in the Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan development effort. This Plan, along with the goods movement component of the 2008 RTP, will serve as the basis of the upcoming SCAG Comprehensive Regional Goods Movement Plan & Implementation Strategy. The MCGMAP effort entailed numerous stakeholder meetings including Executive Management leadership to finalize critical aspects of the consensus document.
- Have finalized all major studies for FY08 under the goods movement program division, including: the Inland Port Feasibility Study, the Goods Movement Environmental Mitigation Strategy Study, and the Port and Modal Elasticity Phase 2 initiative.
- Executive Management and staff were instrumental in providing a freight rail/grade separation business needs framework to key state legislative staff in order to facilitate the financing of such projects. To this end, a number of goods movement related "Business Cases," identifying potential investment strategies, were completed in this fiscal year.
- Supported regional multi-county goods movement consensus group to obtain \$1.6 billion in Prop 1B funding for goods movement and air quality improvement projects.
- Hosted the 2008 Annual Housing Summit, with a successful press conference, and 2nd Annual Compass Blueprint Recognition Awards.
- Hosted the 1st Annual Regional Transit Summit.
- Completed 13 Compass Demonstration Projects in the following jurisdictions: South Bay Cities, North Orange Cities, SANBAG, Ontario - Phase 2, El Centro - Phase 2, Fillmore, Ventura, Baldwin Park, San Gabriel, Azusa, El Monte, Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, City of LA and Ventura County. In addition, we have selected round three Compass Demonstration Projects in the following 10 communities: Burbank, Calexico, Calimesa, Coachella, Culver City, Desert Hot Springs, Holtville, Indio, Los Angeles County, Sunset Junction.
- Pre-qualified 50 consultant firms to be eligible to compete to provide services for the Compass program to streamline the RFQ process and increase participation.
- Initiated Compass Toolbox Tuesdays program to provide training to local government planners on SCAG's most requested technical services.
- Secured \$1.075 million in competitive funding for the Year Three California Blueprint Planning Grant program.
- Successfully coordinated the San Gabriel Valley EnergyWise Partnership, saving San Gabriel Valley cities almost 3,000,000 kWh in annual energy use.
- Held a successful new member orientation in Long Beach.
- Established regional offices in Orange County (which will be staffed in September) and Imperial (which will be staffed in October). Additional offices will be opened in the upcoming months.
- Held a successful General Assembly.
- Held a successful RTP Press Conference.

- Enrolled five new member cities – South Gate, 7/25/08; La Puente, 6/30/08; Mission Viejo, 6/12/08; Dana Point, 6/20/08; Chino Hills, 6/16/08; and San Jacinto, 8/28/07 and Canyon Lake., 8/10/07.
- Adopted a balanced FY '09 SCAG Budget
- Adopted SCAG Agency Goals for FY '09
- Worked with Senator Lowenthal to support passage of SB 974 – the goods movement and air quality mitigation container fee.
- Conclusion of an agency audit and adoption of the 2008-2009 budget.

Finally, US Senate Environment & Public Works Committee Chairwoman Barbara Boxer scheduled a field hearing in Sacramento on September 3rd and in LA on September 4th to discuss upcoming reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users). The five-year transportation funding legislation will expire September 30, 2009 unless extended. SCAG along with AQMD, Metro, OCTA, RCTC, VCTC, SANBAG, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments and LA Chamber were invited to provide testimony at the Los Angeles field hearing hosted by Metro. SCAG's testimony centered on two Board adopted goals for the current fiscal year: increasing funding for goods movement and improving air quality for the region. SCAG testimony included funding suggestions related to goods movement and air quality that the Committee could consider when developing their program principles for the new federal five-year transportation funding re-authorization legislation. Copies of the testimony are available from staff.

None of these many, many accomplishments would have been possible without the hard work and dedicated professionalism of staff. Let's have a wonderful and productive September.